

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section _____ Page _____

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 04001075

Date Listed: 12/2/2004

Building at 816 South Grand Avenue

Los Angeles

CA

Property Name

County

State

N/A

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

[Handwritten Signature]
Signature of the Keeper

12/2/04
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

U. T. M. Coordinates:

The correct UTM Coordinates should read: 11 383864 3767914.

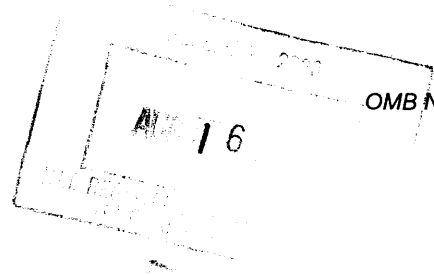
These clarifications were confirmed with the CA SHPO office.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name: 816 South Grand Avenue

other names/site number: N/A

2. Location

street & number: 816 South Grand Avenue

not for publication: N/A

city or town: Los Angeles

vicinity: N/A

state: CA

code: CA

county: Los Angeles

code: 037

zip code: 90017

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 12 AUG 2004
Signature of certifying official Date

California Office of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register (See continuation sheet.)
- determined eligible for the National Register (See continuation sheet.)
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

[Signature] 12/2/04
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

• Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply) • Category of Property (Check only one) • Number of Resources within Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Non contributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	
Cat:	Sub:	Cat:	Sub:
<u>TRANSPORTATION</u>	<u>road-related (vehicular)</u>	<u>WORK IN PROGRESS</u>	
<u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	<u>business</u>	<u>DOMESTIC</u>	<u>multiple dwelling</u>
		<u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	<u>business</u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Beaux Arts</u>	foundation <u>CONCRETE</u>
	roof <u>COMPOSITION</u>
	walls <u>CONCRETE/BRICK</u>
	other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
See Continuation Sheet.

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8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1924

Significant Dates 1924

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Curlett, Aleck & Beelman, Claud

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheet.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 11 383864 376914 3 _____

2 _____ 4 _____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

name/title Wendy Hillis

organization Architectural Resources Group date 10 March 2004

street & number Pier 9, The Embarcadero telephone (415) 421-1680

city or town San Francisco state CA zip code 94111

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Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location is included.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

- Representative black and white photographs of the property are included.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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Property Owner

=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Patrick McNerney, Grand Historic Properties LLC

street & number 54 Mint Street, 5th floor telephone (415) 442-4800

city or town San Francisco state CA zip code 94103

United States Department of the Interior
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

816 South Grand
Name of property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

816 S. Grand Avenue is an eight-story, mixed-use commercial building, located in the urban core of downtown Los Angeles. It was built as a public parking garage with retail space on the ground floor. Its design was executed such that the primary, Grand Avenue façade resembled an office building rather than a parking garage. The primary façade abuts the sidewalk; vacant lots are located on either side, to the north and south, where neighboring buildings have been demolished; and an alley runs along the rear.

CONSTRUCTION AND MASSING

The building is eight stories high and constructed of a reinforced concrete frame with brick infill. A reinforced concrete frame also supports the interior spaces, and the floors are concrete pans. The original interior partitions were hollow clay tile. The massing of the building is a rectangular footprint of uniform height with a narrower, nine-story elevator tower centered on the rear façade. One-story segments fill in the northeast and southeast corners alongside the tower.

EXTERIOR

The arrangement of the primary façade follows the standard Beaux Arts organizational model for high-rise buildings, which divides the façade into a base, a shaft of the repeated floors of the building, and a capitol which crowns the façade. The primary façade is divided into seven bays, and the fenestration consists of original, single-pane, double-hung, wood sash windows.

The base of the building includes the first and second stories. The first story has a large opening for cars to pass through, and slightly narrower openings for retail storefronts. This part of the base is clad in cast stone in a pattern that imitates large blocks of ashlar masonry. The course that runs across the top of the three openings has slanted voussoirs and keystones in imitation of three flat arches. This portion of the façade is capped by a denticulated molding. The sills of the second story windows sit on a simple string course with a rounded profile.

Between the second story windows are panels with a slight relief in them. These panels, also of case stone, are aligned with the brick piers above, which define the window bays. Above this, a series of roughly square panels continues the line of the piers, and panels recessed above each window contain roundels with large rosettes in low relief.

The base is capped with an unornamented cornice on which the windows of the third story rest. The piers are clad in cast stone to a height of about on to two feet beyond this cornice, a simple gesture that serves to knit the façade's base to the shaft.

The shaft of the building is a simple system of piers and spandrels, both of which are of facing brick. The piers have slightly flat and abstracted capitals at the top of the façade, located between the tops of the eighth story windows. A simple entablature rests on these capitals.

A parapet with cast stone relief decoration crowns the façade. The ornamented portion is centered over the central five bays. A large urn sits to either side of this parapet, on a ledge atop the entablature. The parapet has a broad frieze decorated with urns, rosettes, garlands, winged beasts, and a central escutcheon in low relief. A denticulated molding runs above the frieze, which is capped by a series of antefixes. A decorative, sculptural finial at each end is made up of an

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816 South Grand
Name of property

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County and State

arrangement of foliate motifs and winged beasts. These end elements are in poor condition, though the entire parapet, which appears to be constructed of brick, has been braced against the roof.

The two separate buildings that stood on either side of the 816 South Grand structure have been demolished and two surface parking lots exist in their place. The sides and rear of the building are entirely utilitarian in design, and it was probably expected that they would face alleys and light wells and not be visible. The frame and infill are exposed (though covered with several layers of peeling paint) on the sides and rear of the building.

The sides of the building are six bays wide and have one large window centered in the top of each of the middle four bays. The fenestration on the sides and rear of the building is original multi-pane, steel industrial sash windows. These windows have an operable awning segment.

INTERIOR

The original interior use of the building was masked by the primary façade, which appears to be that of an ordinary office building rather than a utilitarian structure housing a parking garage. However, the interior, with the exception of the ground floor retail spaces, was designed for the purpose of parking automobiles. The central bay served as an entrance to the interior parking areas.

It is assumed that the original interiors of the buildings consisted of exposed concrete walls, columns, ceilings and floors. This assumption is based solely on the visual appearance of the extant historic fabric and the fact that this was a utilitarian space. No original drawings for the building, indicating interior finishes have been located, and all historic garage areas were built-out as office spaces prior to purchase by the present owner. Later alterations and adaptations include a mezzanine office level that was added to the building between the first and second floors in 1925. Several restrooms and additional egresses were added later in several places throughout the building, along with various other minor tenant improvements. The storefronts were altered in 1972, according to City building permit records, within the original frames. The original door of the vehicle entrance is missing, and no available building permits record when this occurred. The type or appearance of the original door is not known, but the entrance itself has not been altered.

Beginning in 2002, the building was rehabilitated for use as loft housing, with retail spaces remaining at the ground floor level. Besides the partitioning of apartments at the upper floors, the work included: the addition of a full floor at the previous mezzanine level, new glass and wood-clad-metal storefronts with steel awnings, steel balconies flanking the elevator shaft at the rear elevation with 14 multi-lite steel sash enlarged to serve as doors accessing these balconies, a new central elevator, and infill of the vehicular lift shaft above the ground floor level to gain additional floor space. Structural upgrades includes a new 24"-thick mat foundation, steel braced frames and shotcrete walls. The National Park Service certified this work to be in compliance with *the Standards*, and the building owner is seeking 20% tax credits for this work.

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816 South Grand
Name of property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

816 South Grand Avenue is a multi-story parking garage from the period in which the building type was just beginning to evolve. Constructed in 1924, it was one of six multi-story garages built in downtown Los Angeles between 1920 and 1928.¹ Designed by architects Aleck Curlett & Claud Beelman, the building had a capacity for 500 cars, and two retail spaces on the street level. Its design was executed such that the primary Grand Avenue façade resembled an office building rather than a parking garage. The design was intended to blend in with other office and multi-use buildings in downtown Los Angeles, and reflects the fact that it was constructed before the parking garage developed its own typological language. The building appears eligible for the National Register at the local level under Criterion C because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, a multi-story urban parking garage, during a particular period, the 1920s.

According to historian Richard Longstreth, developers in the 1920s saw parking garages as a solution to the problems of the increasingly crowded downtown Los Angeles shopping district.² Though such structures were expensive to construct and operate, they were an integral part of the infrastructure of the shopping district, as the number of cars which patrons would drive into downtown Los Angeles greatly increased in the 1920s. The garages were constructed both by independent developers to serve the needs of the area, and by major department stores for the use of their own customers. These downtown Los Angeles structures ranged in capacity from 350 to 1,000 cars, with four of the six holding between 500 and 600 cars.³ Currently, only three of these Los Angeles garages remain intact: the subject property; the May Company Garage at 218-228 West Ninth Street (both of these designed by Curlett & Beelman); and the Auto Center Garage at 742-744 South Hope Street. A fourth, Hill's Garage, was converted to an office building and its façade completely altered in the 1950s. The other three garages dating to the 1920s are no longer extant.

Two methods devised in the 1920s for transporting cars to upper floors of a parking structure are still in practice today. The first is by way of ramps, and the second is through use of freight elevators into which the cars are driven and then lifted. The ramp system has become the dominant mode, while elevator garages are significantly more unusual, particularly in Los Angeles. The elevators were often used as a solution to the problem of building the structure on a narrow or constricted site.⁴ The subject property appears to be the only remaining multi-story example in Los Angeles of the latter type, with level floors that are connected by vehicular elevators and staircases.

The level floor plates have allowed the building to be adapted for uses other than parking cars, with minimal and reversible alterations. The fire escape on the primary façade may have been added in the 1950s, when the building was first converted for uses such as manufacturing and offices, in order to meet the number of exits required by safety codes.

¹ Longstreth, Richard. *City Center to Regional Mall: Architecture, the Automobile, and Retailing in Los Angeles, 1920-1950*. Boston: MIT Press, 1997, p. 370, n.52. The garage at 531-535 S. Maple is one story plus a basement and has been omitted from this discussion because of its size relative to the others listed.

² Longstreth, pp. 45-46.

³ Longstreth, p. 370, n.52.

⁴ Longstreth, p. 48.

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816 South Grand
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

The firm of Curlett and Beelman was established in Los Angeles in 1919. Aleck Curlett was the son of the well-known San Francisco architect, William Curlett. The younger Curlett, born in 1880, grew up in San Francisco, but early in the Twentieth century he moved to Los Angeles. His partnership with Claude Beelman was a fruitful one with commissions for commercial buildings in the region bringing the two much success. Beelman, born in 1884, received the Harvard Scholarship from the Architectural League of America. Following his formal education he worked for several years in the east, then moving to Los Angeles where he met Curlett. The firm designed a number of significant structures in the greater Los Angeles area, including: the Elks Club (1925) (now the Plaza Hotel) off Wilshire Blvd near McArthur Park; the former headquarters of Barker Brothers furniture company (1925) at 818 West 7th Street in Los Angeles; the Culver Hotel (1924) in Culver City; and the Farmers and Merchants Bank Office Tower (1923) in downtown Los Angeles; and the Pacific Southwest Bank Building in Pasadena. The firm's collaborative work often reflected the traditional commercial buildings of the day.

Curlett and Beelman practiced jointly until the late 1920s, when Beelman began work on the Eastern Columbia Building (1929), the drawings for which only carry his name. Clad in glossy turquoise terra cotta trimmed with deep blue and gold terra cotta, decorated with sunburst patterns, geometric shapes, zig-zags, chevrons and stylized animals, the Eastern Columbia was a radical departure from Beelman's earlier work with Curlett. Whatever the legal circumstances of their relationship it is clear that Curlett and Beelman's design interests and philosophies were moving in different directions by the end of the decade. Curlett continued to employ traditional, conservative architectural motifs in his work, while Beelman began experimenting with color, materials and texture in his Art Deco-inspired designs.

Beelman's earlier buildings in partnership with Curlett, however, were designed in the more conservative, Beaux Arts or revival styles. The most prominent of these collaborative projects was the Roosevelt Building at 727 West Seventh Street. This twelve-story building is representative of Beaux Arts Renaissance Revival style and features monumental arches on the 7th Street facade. One of the distinctive selling points of the Roosevelt upon its completion in 1926-1927 was that it contained a two-level parking garage for 350 cars in the basement. The experience that Curlett & Beelman gained in designing the garage at 816 South Grand in 1924 and the garage for the May Company in 1926 would serve them in future, more prominent, projects, including the Roosevelt.

The garage at 816 South Grand is one of only three early parking structures remaining in downtown Los Angeles. The building is reflective of the body of work of Curlett and Beelman and it provides insight into early solutions of the design problem of placing a utilitarian structure in the context of high-end office structures. The building's design camouflages its original use, making its façade an important component of understanding the significance of the structure. Within the context of parking garage design, it is clear that early in the building type development it was important for the building's form to not necessarily follow its function.

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816 South Grand
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Bibliography

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Section 10 Page 1

816 South Grand

Name of property

Los Angeles, California

County and State

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary is the legal boundary of the property:

City of Los Angeles

Huber Tract

Block 54

Lot 18

PHOTOGRAPHS

The following information applies to all photographs:

816 South Grand Avenue, Los Angeles

Los Angeles County, California

Photographer: Wendy Hillis

Date: June 2004

Original Negatives: Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco, California

Photo #1: View of west (front) facade

Photo #2: View of east (rear) facade

Photo#3: View of north (side) facade

Photo #4: View of south (side) facade